Welcoming *Ramaḍān*

Shaykh Ismāʿīl as-Susayyī

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Title: Welcoming Ramaḍān
Author: Ismāʿīl as-Susayyī
Publisher & Translator: al-Ikhlāṣ Foundation
Publication Date: 1447 AH/2026 CE

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
١٤٣٨

O honored believers, we are delighted due to the coming of the month of Ramaḍān and grateful to Allāh for He has blessed us with reaching this holy month once again. We ask Allāh for safety, well-being, and His support in worship; so that we may do tarāwiḥ, read and recite the Qurʾān, give charity and make Him pleased with us.

The Virtue of Ramaḍān

The month of Ramaḍān is a great month. It is the month of worship, the month of the Qurʾān, the month of victory and conquest, it is the month in which the Battle of Badr and the Conquest of Makkah happened, and it is the month in which the Qurʾān was revealed, just as Allāh says: **"The month of Ramaḍān, in it was revealed the Qurʾān."** (al-Baqarah, 185) It is the month of blessings and goodness. Praise be to Allāh; for He brought it back for us once more. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "On the first night of the month of Ramaḍān, the Shayatin are shackled, the jinns are restrained, the gates of the Hellfire are shut such that no gate among them would be opened. The gates of Paradise are opened such that no gate among them would be closed, and a caller (some scholars have said that this caller is an angel) calls: 'O seeker of the good; come near!' and 'O seeker of evil; stop! For there are those whom Allāh frees from the Hellfire.' And that is every night."[1] O Allāh make us among those whom you will free from the Hellfire.

[1] Tirmidhī (no. 682) and Ibn Mājah (no. 1642)

Five Steps to Please Allāh in Ramaḍān

First step: Re-examine your actions, hold yourself accountable and rebuke yourself for your past sins. Ask yourself what you achieved by your sins, and ask yourself whether you were safeguarded against shirk and kufr or not, whether you disbelieved in ṭāghūt or not, whether you rejected (religious) innovations and superstitions or not. Did you commit what was unlawful? Did you eat from money that was earned unlawfully? Did you preserve your prayers? Did you enjoin good and forbid evil? Did you recite the Qurʾān? Did you do the voluntary sunnah acts? Did you do dhikr? How were your manners with your surroundings? And so-on. If you did everything well, then thank yourself for it and appreciate your good deeds; but do not become arrogant. And if you did bad, then rebuke yourself over it and repent to Allāh. Know that it is not too late to repent, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu) said: "Rebuke yourself before you are rebuked."[2] Rebuke yourself and ask yourself what you have done before your death. Imagine your death, when your soul will leave your body and you will be all alone. No one and nothing will be of help to you at that moment except your good deeds. Imagine when you will stand before Allāh and you will not be able to deny the wrongdoings you did in this life, your tongue, hands and feet will all testify to what you did. Ponder and fear Allāh who has prepared a fire which is sixty-nine times hotter than the hottest fire in this world, just as the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "Your (ordinary) fire is of

[2] az-Zuhd (no. 633) of Imām Aḥmad

seventy parts of the Hellfire." So a man said to him: "O Messenger of Allāh, is not some of the fire of this world enough?" So the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) responded: "It (the Hellfire) is hotter than the fire of this world by sixty-nine times."[3] So imagine that day and strive to avoid the Hellfire.

Second step: Repentance from sins and wrongdoings and abstaining from them. O dear Muslim brother and sister, come and repent to Rabb ul-ʿĀlamīn (Lord of the Worlds), the wind of repentance and its time has come. Do a ghusl (full-body wash) of repentance or ablution. Although there is no authentic ḥadīth for ghusl to be done specifically for sinners, except the kāfir who becomes a Muslim, or for praying two units specifically for repentance - the scholars, however, have stated that doing ghusl, purifying oneself and praying two units for Allāh will get the servant closer to his Lord. Once you prayed two units, open your hands facing the sky and hold them high up until your shoulders or have your palms face your face, then begin in the name of Allāh, praise Allāh, send peace and blessings upon the Prophet; then call upon Him with His Names and prove that He matters to you and that you fear Him, then say with a regretful heart: "O Allāh, O Lord, I was ignorant and neglectful. I am a sinner, forgive and pardon me. You are my Lord, I have come to You and I have no one besides You whom I can supplicate to and request, and no one can forgive me except You. Keep me safe and far from the Hellfire and make me witness Paradise. Wash and purify

[3] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 3265)

me from my sins and forgive me O Allāh." You must have also fulfilled the conditions of repentance which are:

1. Sincerity. Your repentance must be only for Allāh and not for anyone or anything else. It should not be so you are praised and respected by others, as many now do, and that is riyāʾ.
2. Abandoning and turning away from the sin.
3. Strongly intending to not go back to that sin.
4. Regret over the sin in your heart and not having pride over that sin. You must feel sorrow and regret over the sin you did.

And think whether you took the rights of others, or insulted them, or backbit anyone. If you did, you must go back to the person who was harmed by this and seek forgiveness from them. If they did not forgive you, you must do what they request of you until they forgive you. Allāh says: **"O you who have believed, repent to Allāh with sincere repentance. Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow."** (at-Taḥrīm, 8) And He says: **"And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed."** (an-Nūr, 31) And He says: **"Say: 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"** (az-Zumar, 53) and the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa

salam) said: "O people, repent to Allāh, for indeed, I repent to Him one-hundred times a day."[4]

Third step: Reciting and reading the Holy Qurʾān. ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās (raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu) narrated: "The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) was the most generous of all the people, and he used to be more generous in the month of Ramaḍān when Jibrīl used to meet him. Jibrīl used to meet him every night in Ramaḍān to study the Holy Qurʾān carefully together. The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) used to become more generous than the fast wind when he met Jibrīl."[5] Ibn Rajab (raḥimahullāh) commented on this ḥadīth: "This ḥadīth proves the recommendation of studying the Qurʾān during Ramaḍān, gathering for it, and reviewing the Qurʾān with one who has memorized the most from it. It proves the recommendation of increasing the recitation of the Qurʾān in the month of Ramaḍān. [...] And it has been mentioned in the ḥadīth of Ibn ʿAbbās that the studying sessions between him (the Prophet) and Jibrīl was at night, thus, it serves as evidence for the recommendation of increasing recitation of the Qurʾān in the nights of Ramaḍān. For at night, distractions are cut off, resolve is gathered, and the heart and the tongue come together upon reflection, just as Allāh says: **'Indeed, the hours of the night are more effective for concurrence [of heart and tongue] and more suitable for words.'** (al-Muzammil, 6)"[6] Imām ʿAbd ur-Razzāq (raḥimahullāh) said: "When Sufyān

[4] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 2702)
[5] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 3220)
[6] Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif (pg. 169)

ath-Thawrī entered Ramaḍān, he would leave aside all acts of worship and devote himself to the recitation of the Qurʾān"[7] Thus, recitation of the Qurʾān during Ramaḍān is from the guidance of the pious Salaf. It has also been reported that when az-Zuhrī entered Ramaḍān, he would say: "Verily, it is recitation of the Qurʾān and giving out food."[8]

Ibn Rajab (raḥimahullāh) said: "Know that the believer combines for himself two struggles against his soul in the month of Ramaḍān. One in the day by fasting, and one in the night by standing in prayer. Whoever fulfills these two struggles with their due rights, and remains patient over them will have his reward given in full without measure."[9] And the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "[A servant's] fasting and (recitation of) the Qurʾān will intercede for him on the Day of Judgement. His fasting will say: 'O Lord, verily I prevented him from food and drink by day, so allow me to intercede for him.' And his (recitation of) the Qurʾān will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from sleep at night, so allow me to intercede for him.' And the two will intercede for the servant."[10] and he (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) also said: "The Qurʾān will come on the Day of Judgement, like a pale man, and will say: 'I am the one that kept you awake at night and made you thirsty during the day.'"[11] It is said that the Qurʾān will be an intercessor there

[7] Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif (pg. 171)
[8] Same source as footnote no. 7
[9] Same source as footnote no. 7
[10] Musnad Aḥmad (no. 6626) and it was authenticated by al-Albānī.
[11] Ibn Mājah (no. 3781)

and then.

Fourth step: Generosity and being open-handed. As we previously mentioned, the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) was very generous during the month of Ramaḍān. Ibn Rajab (raḥimahullāh) commented on the ḥadīth of Ibn ʿAbbās which was mentioned: "The generosity of the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) greatly increased during the month of Ramaḍān compared to other months. Just as the generosity of his Lord also increases during it."[12] He also said: "His (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) generosity included all forms of generosity, such as giving knowledge, wealth, himself to Allāh in upholding His religion, guiding His servants, and conveying benefit to them in every way, feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant, meeting their needs, and carrying their burdens."[13] It has come in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from Anas ibn Mālik (raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu): "The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) was not asked regarding anything for the sake of Islām except he gave it. There came to him a person and he gave him a large flock (of sheep and goats) and he went back to his people and said: 'My people, embrace Islām, for Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) gives so much charity as if he has no fear of want.'"[14] And the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "There are in Paradise chambers whose outside can be seen from their inside and their inside can be seen from their outside." So a bedouin man stood and said: "Who is it for?" So the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam)

[12] Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif (pg. 348)
[13] Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif (pg. 164)
[14] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 2312)

responded: "For those who speak well, feed others, fast regularly, and pray during the night while the people sleep."[15] So O my Muslim brother, do not see it as little and do so that people break their fast on your hand and wealth, as the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "Whoever provides the food for a fasting person to break his fast with, then for him is the same reward as his (the fasting person's), without anything being diminished from the reward of the fasting person."[16] And Allāh says: **"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allāh multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing."** (al-Baqarah, 261)

Fifth step: Properly fasting and doing the mandatory acts and voluntary sunnah acts of fasting, abstaining from what diminishes the reward of your fast. The word "Ramaḍān" comes from the Arabic root of "Ramḍ" which refers to the warmness of a stone. Fasting's technical meaning is: "Abstaining from food, drink, intercourse and what nullifies and corrupts it (the fasting)." You must first intend to fast as it is mandatory, as it has come in the ḥadīth: "Indeed actions are by intentions."[17] Intention for the fast is mandatory, you must intend during which some time in the night is left and it has not become dawn yet, otherwise your fasting will not be accepted: "Whoever does not have the

[15] Tirmidhī (no. 1984)
[16] Tirmidhī (no. 807)
[17] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1907)

intention of fasting from the night before, then there is no fast for him."[18]

Some voluntary sunnah acts you can do which increase the reward of your fasting include:

1. Breaking your fast early. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "The people will continue to prosper as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast."[19] And Anas (raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu) said: "The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) would not pray maghrib unless he had broken his fast, even if it was with water."[20]
2. Breaking your fast with a fresh (ruṭbah) or dry (tamarah) date or water. Anas (raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu) said: "The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) would break his fast with fresh dates before he prayed. But if there were no fresh dates, he had a few dry dates, and if there were no dry dates, he took some mouthfuls of water."[21]
3. Supplicating to Allāh after breaking the fast with the following:

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ وَابْتَلَّتِ الْعُرُوقُ وَثَبَتَ الأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

"Dhahabah aẓ-Ẓamʿu, wabtallatil-ʿuruqu, wa thabatal-ajru in shāʾ Allāh." Which means: "Thirst has gone, the arteries are moist, and the reward is sure, if Allāh wills."[22]

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[18] an-Nasāʾī (no. 2334)
[19] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1957) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1098)
[20] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ (no. 4858)
[21] Abū Dāwūd (no. 2356)
[22] Abū Dāwūd (no. 2357)

4. Waking up before dawn and eating suḥūr. This differentiates us from the Jews and Christians. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "Take suḥūr for it is a blessing."[23]

O my Muslim brother or sister, don't diminish the reward of your fasting with vulgar language and sins. For the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam) said: "Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allāh is not in need of his leaving his food and drink."[24] So don't be from those who follow their desires, dunyā, sin, and are heedless of the Day of Judgment, during or outside Ramaḍān.

Final Word

In the end, we ask Allāh to make this Ramaḍān full of goodness and blessings. We ask Him to bring victory to His servants of tawḥīd who oppose shirk and its people. We ask Him to keep us safe and grant us well-being, and we ask Him to cause us to reach the final nights of Ramaḍān, Laylat ul-Qadr, and allow us to worship Him in the best way. And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad and his family and companions.

[23] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1923)
[24] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1903)